10: d'Orleans--271-272 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 248, 286, 402, 462

[LSS: in the village of Ban Sop Huan] "Under the houses the women are busy in various employments, and the young girls are separating the cotton from its grain. They use an ingenious machine for this purpose: a tray is placed upon a support about the level of the waist; above it, two rollers, one of iron and one of wood, turn in contrary directions, as the cotton passes between them it is freed from its impurities, which drop on one side, while the textile fabric falls on the other. One of the rollers is moved with one hand by a simple crank while the other is worked by the foot and a pedal [272] which corresponds with an eccentric, it is also furnished with a flywheel (the machine is made entirely of wood). After the cotton is cleaned it is placed in baskets, about twenty-four inches high and ten wide. When full they are sold for one rupee each.

Elsewhere the spun cotton is being dyed, while other women are making a blue stuff, crossed with yellow threads. They are seated, and use a weaving loom with two pedals, two shuttles, and three small boards. They throw one shuttle after the movement of the two small boards, and the other after the third. Tobacco is being dried on some bamboos and further away another group is winding silk."

10: d'Orleans--287 T-3 (1891-92) 1894 Laos
116, 286, 301, 462, 534

"As soon as we are fairly in Mekong, we stop on the left bank for luncheon, near a small village hidden among the cocoa-trees. A good road traverses it, and leads to the pagoda; the women are working at the cotton, carding it with a sort of small bow, spinning and weaving it; the children impress me by the fairness of their skin; a great many wear bracelets on their feet. Hanging in the courtyard of the pagoda, I notice a bell at least two yards long, made from the hollow trunk of a tree, it is struck every morning and evening."

23: Franck--289-290 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians-1-2
116, 291, 286, 314, 515

"The women were usually the first to see us, for they were constantly bathing themselves and their naked urchins in the stream, and they were clever at getting into or out of their barrel-like single garment without unduly exposing themselves. I saw more bathing on that journey down the Nam-khan than during my two years in China, and less uncleanliness in all Laos thăn in the smallest Chinese village. The women of Luang Prabang, especially along the rivers, are no burden to their fathers and husbands so far as clothing is concerned. In every village we visited they were naked to the waist, and did not know it; at least [290] they did not seem to be conscious that in other, often less modest lands, such a costume might be frowned upon. They wore a single piece of cloth, spun from cotton grown on the spot, and woven on hand-looms under their long-legged houses. Colored in the thread with dyes made from nuts and vegetable growths of the region, this strip is simply wrapped about the waist. Or, in the case of a few of the youngest, which in that backward land still means the more modest women, the unmarried perhaps, or at least those who had not yet borne a child, it is wrapped about the lower two thirds of the breasts, with correspondingly more of the legs showing. Thus one recognized the girls of flapper age by their shapely brown legs and the matrons by their resemblance in costume to the Venus of Milo. Once a child has arrived, the exposure incident to suckling it seems to overcome virginal modesty, or in the absence of offspring pride no doubt soon joins carelessness in casting

out the habits of maidenhood, so that there were displayed the scrawny pendent udders of the sterile as well as the withered rags of old age. The sight of a white man appeared to move some of the women to cover their breasts, a mere matter of deftly raising the garment. Whether this gesture was a recognition of the susceptibility of the French--who surely could not have issued non-exposure decrees!--or a mere matter of politeness, like the male squat, there was no means of knowing."

23: Franck--343 T-2 (1924) 1926 Laotians
116, 248, 283, 286

"These Laosian villagers grow their own cotton, and the women spin this and the kapok of their great tropical trees on a crude wheel without a felly, then weave it on handlooms into the garment they wear as skirt or wrapper. Beneath many a house, or under the projecting porch roof at the end of it, may be seen the lady of the family, in the usual comfortable and economical upper garment of nothing at all, leisurely engaged at her household tasks, while others, some of them far from ugly, sit in the shade beneath their pile-raised dwellings weaving their simple wardrobes, in rather striking patterns and of excellent wearing qualities, on the crudest of looms, with a stick shuttle that is thrown back and forth by hand."

285 lacquer -- red on the inside and black on the outside -- and deco-
532 rated with a fine gilt design which makes a border, like a galloon" (1).
175*

1. Cf. G. Maspero, ibid. /Un empire colonial francais: l'Indochine. Paris, 1929-1930/, pp. 190-191.

286 Even today weaving remains women's work, and is done solely in
462 the home. The materials, which may be silk or cotton, striped or
532 splashed with colors, embroidered or spangled with gold and silver thread, nevertheless acquire, under the action of light and carefree hands, chatoyant, harmonious or dazzling tones, and yet the looms which are used are simple in the extreme. Patterns "are obtained, as before the invention of the Jacquard loom, by alternately isolating or raising certain woof threads by means of thin bamboo splints" (2).

2. Cf. L. de Reinach, ibid. /Le Laos, posthumous edition, Paris, 1911/, p. 333.

181 Thus did the Laotian of the seventeenth century live in peace, respecting the law of the least effort with an amiable perserverance amidst his laughter and his games. . . . The princes were perhaps the
/565/ only ones in the whole kingdom to know any of the worries which power and its exigencies bring, and it was for not having wished to compromise with his authoritarian principles that King Souligna, towards the end of his reign, compromised the destinies of his people forever.

643* Condemnation of the heir apparent to death. He had three chil-
175* dren, a son Tiao Ratsabout and two daughters. His son married Nang-
648* Tian-Koumali, who gave birth in her turn to two children, King-Kitsarath and Intha-Som. Nang-Tian-Koumali was the sister of a prince of the Sip-Song-Panas who had been driven out of his country by a Chinese invasion and whom the king of Lan-Xang had welcomed in Vientiane together with his family. Tiao Ratsabout, however, committed the imprudence of seducing the wife of the chief palace page. In accordance with his edict which punished the crime of
/684/ adultery by death, Souligna pitilessly referred the deceived husband's complaint to the royal tribunal and allowed his son to be sentenced to capital punishment

The result was that at the king's death, which occurred /130/ in 1694, the direct heirs to the crown were his grandsons King-Kitsarath

149: Reinach--134 G-3 (no date) 1901 AM1 Indochina
Laotians AM8

"Costume. The Laotian costume is the langouti or Siamese sampot. This is a long band of cloth without any seams, and between one and 1.2 meters wide by 2.5 to three meters long. The cloth is placed around the waist to make a skirt, with the opening in front. To keep the skirt in place a knot is made in front with part of the surplus cloth, and the loose ends of the cloth left hanging in front are rolled, passed between the legs and attached to the belt in the middle of the back. The skirt then takes the form of a pair of baggy trousers covering the front of the legs down to the knees and leaving the lower part of the thighs bare in back. The chest is left bare, and a sash is tied around the waist. This is the ordinary garment, and that worn by all the common people. The sash is often worn on the shoulder or around the chest, but it has to be removed and wound around the loins whenever one speaks to anyone who has a right to one's respect. Dandies wear shoes, stockings or socks, quite frequently a short-sleeved or sleeveless knitted vest, a jacket made of white cotton or flannel, depending on the season, and a hat of any type whatever, or even a cap. But these are imported European styles which have not become widespread. Umbrellas enjoy great favor." (Le Laos Français.)

"This costume is a relatively recent import, for two hundred years or so ago the Laotians on the banks of the river, as those of the interior still do today, wore a fairly long jacket [178] made of cotton cloth woven in the land. The jacket was caught in at the waist by a sash and came down over a broad pair of trousers made of the same material. The whole garment was dark blue or almost black in color. On the head they wore a kind of turban made of silk or cotton of the same color.

The abandonment of this purely Thai costume was due to the influence of the Siamese and Cambodians during their incursions into Laos. It was also at this time that the Laotians formed the habit of cutting their hair, which they had previously worn rolled in a coil on the back of the head.

"Laotian women wear a skirt which covers them from the hips to the ankles and is made of silk interwoven with gold threads. These skirts are rather dark in color, and the pattern is made up of vertical stripes which are close together and difficult to see. In Luang-Prabang the lower part of the garment is decorated with a flat trimming formed of two or three closely spaced gold galloons. At the top of the skirt a sash made of red cloth and embroidered to a greater

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which form the private home of the house's inhabitants.

A sort of stairway without railings or a ladder gives access to the veranda from one of the short sides of the rectangle. Often a second ladder leads to a small uncovered platform [183] situated at the other end of the house. This, so to speak, is the service stairway, for the platform serves as a kitchen or storeroom and for various private uses.

Inside the house is divided into two parts by a longitudinal partition pierced by openings which give access to compartments used as bedrooms. The corridor [Illustration here] left free between the partition and the opposite wall constitutes the common room, and is provided with one or several rectangular hearths. The floor of the verandas, the bedrooms and the common room is covered with mats.

[352]
[343]

Furnishings are generally scanty, and consist of mattresses, pillows, cushions, footstools, low stools, blankets, chests, etc.

The space under the house serves as a stable or barn for horses and livestock, a poultry house and a pigsty. The animals are shut up there each night.

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[184] Looms for weaving may be found either under the verandas or underneath the house.

The storehouse for paddy is found nearby. It is also mounted on piles and may be built in a rectangular or circular shape. The "hand" or "foot" mortars used to decorticate paddy may either be near the storehouse under an addition, or else under the house.

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The dimensions of houses are reckoned in Hon or units as long as the span of the arms (1.8 to two meters). Houses may be anywhere from two to eight or nine hons (4 to 20 meters) in length. Their width varies from two to three spans of the arms on the average (four to six meters), not including verandas.

Strictly speaking, the piles are columns which rise from the ground to the tie-beams of the roof trusses. Mortises are cut in them a meter of two above the ground, and the floor joists fitted into the mortises.

Even as they are, these houses resist high winds. They provide good shelter from the sun, rain, etc. and are sufficiently comfortable, even for Europeans. The latter often have to be contented with such houses and can find little fault with them except the instability of the floor and the narrowness of the windows, which makes the inside somewhat dark.

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they bear come, as in the case of the Khao-Thais, from peculiarities
[291] of costume. In fact, whereas the Dam-Thais, both men and women,
563 only wear clothing which is dark blue and almost black, with no colored ornamentation, the Deng-Thais, although they wear the same kind of clothing, always add a few ornaments such as embroidery, galloons or red turbans.

142 Physical appearance. Costume. The Thais have strongly marked
461 features and stern faces. Their complexion is clear and rather swarthy, and they are quite tall. They are more hardy and above all more industrious than the Laotians.

Like the Annamites, the men let their hair grow. They bind it
302 up in a coil on the top of the head and cover it with a vast turban,
291 the ends of which fall onto their shoulders on either side of the face. Men's clothing consists of a broad pair of trousers with a very low seat and a straight tunic buttoned along the side which comes down to the knees. A sort of sash made of the same kind of cloth hugs the
[286] waist over the tunic, as a belt would do. The material used by the Thais for clothing are made of cotton which is generally grown locally and which the [232] women spin, weave and dye themselves. Their garments, made with very coarse, irregular thread, have a rough appearance but are very solid.

142 The women's figures are thick-set but not fleshy. Their faces, which are more rounded than elongated, are pleasant and their eyes are beautiful. But childbearing and the work of the fields soon destroy their gracefulness, and after the age of twenty-five their figures thicken, their wrists and ankles become heavy and their faces begin to harden and wrinkle. [Illustration alongside text here]

[286] The Thai woman wears a skirt which is quite similar to the Laotian skirt, but made of coarser cloth and dyed the same color as the men's
291 clothing. Over this she wears a very short jacket made of the same cloth which is buttoned down the front and sometimes embellished
563 with chased silver work. The height of elegance is for the jacket to be cut in such a way that when the woman moves in a certain way it lets a little skin be seen above the skirt waist. Outside the home and for ceremonies the women put on a sort of dressing gown which covers their other clothing and comes down to the ankle. Its sleeves are very close-fitting, and the garment buttons straight down the front to a point below the waist. A strip of dark violet cloth, for the Dam-Thais, and red for

near their silkworm breeding houses, but it is unfortunate that the new conditions in which the trees are placed should have an adverse effect on silk production. On the plateaus and in the high valleys, in the vicinity of land once occupied by villages, there are many mulberry trees which have continued to survive. They send out new leaves again even after the annual burnings of the forest clearings, and bear leaves which are vigorous and have a more pithy appearance than those of their fellows in the low, humid parts of the country. They are also said to be preferable for feeding silkworms (2).

(2) See Appendix XXIV.

Local consumption absorbs the greater part of the silk production, for the majority of Laotians, both men and women, use it in making the garments which they wear.

We do not possess exact data on the total production of silk in Laos. It has been estimated at about twenty tons annually. The price varies from 400 to 500 francs per hundred kilograms.

OPIUM POPPIES. The opium poppy is cultivated by the Yaos and the Meos, in northern Laos. Towards the end of the rainy season, [376] in September, the poppy seeds are sowed broadcast on land from which maize has just been harvested. Germination is activated by the last rains of the season and the plant flowers at the beginning of December. Harvesting is done shortly after the petals have fallen.

Closely spaced lengthwise incisions are made all along the surface of the capsule, allowing the plant juice to escape. It coagulates upon contact with the air and is collected daily until the plant has been completely exhausted (1).

(1) See Appendix XXV, report of M. Lussan, Cochinchina customs agent. The latter was sent on a mission to Upper Laos to experiment with growing opium poppies by less rudimentary methods than the ones in use among the Meos and the Yaos.

[654]

PAPER TREES. There are several trees in Laos whose bark is used to make paper. They seem to be of the mulberry type and are called "Kok-Sa."

The paper is made by hand on forms, by extremely rudimentary methods. Its manufacture occupies several villages of northern Laos.

433 word, as regards everything connected with housing, furnishings,
472 clothing, household articles, etc. Everyone--men, women and even
463 children-- [454] is able to make the ordinary necessary articles by means of very simple methods and rudimentary tools. Thus it may be said that each house and each family represents a village in miniature.

The only industries really worthy of the name are embroidering on cloth, jewelry-making and working with gold and silver, ironmongery, brass-founding, pottery, basketry, the manufacture of certain lacquered articles, paper-making, wood and ivory carving, fresco painting, gold-washing and especially the making of pirogues, in which the natives show remarkable skill.

286 **Weaving.** The weaving of certain kinds of silk goods with
386 various shaded effects and often spangled with gold, as well as embroidering on cloth, is practiced by a certain number of women in every locality which is of any importance.

The looms used for weaving are extremely simple, and yet brocaded stuffs are made in which the designs are obtained, as before the invention of the Jacquard loom, by isolating or alternatively raising certain woof threads by means of thin strips of bamboo.

Vegetable dyes are used, that is to say that they are produced by trees or plants which grow in the country. Dyeing methods are simple, yet despite this fact the colors last for a long time thanks to a mordant composed of alum or lemon juice. The fundamental colors are blue (indigo), red, yellow and black. With the aid of these dyes the women are able, either by suitably proportioned mixtures or by various juxtapositions on the threads or on the cloth, to obtain a great variety of shades.

For some fifteen years now tinctorial powders have also been used which have an aniline base and are of German origin. But these dyes fall far short of being as colorfast and long-lasting as the local dyes. Their colors do not merge as well, and with them it is impossible to obtain the harmonious shades which the tinctorial products of Laos give to cloth and to thread.

283 [455] For spangled cloth goods and embroidery, the gold thread
28[illegible] in most widespread use is the one made by the Chinese. It consists of a strand of cotton on which a strip of paper gilded with fine gold a few tenths of a millimeter thick is wound in a spiral. Attempts have been made to introduce gold thread of European manufacture, but it has not met with favor on the part of the specialists, who have preferred the Chinese thread.

149: Reinach--349a G-3 (no date) 1901 AMI Indochina
Laotians AM8

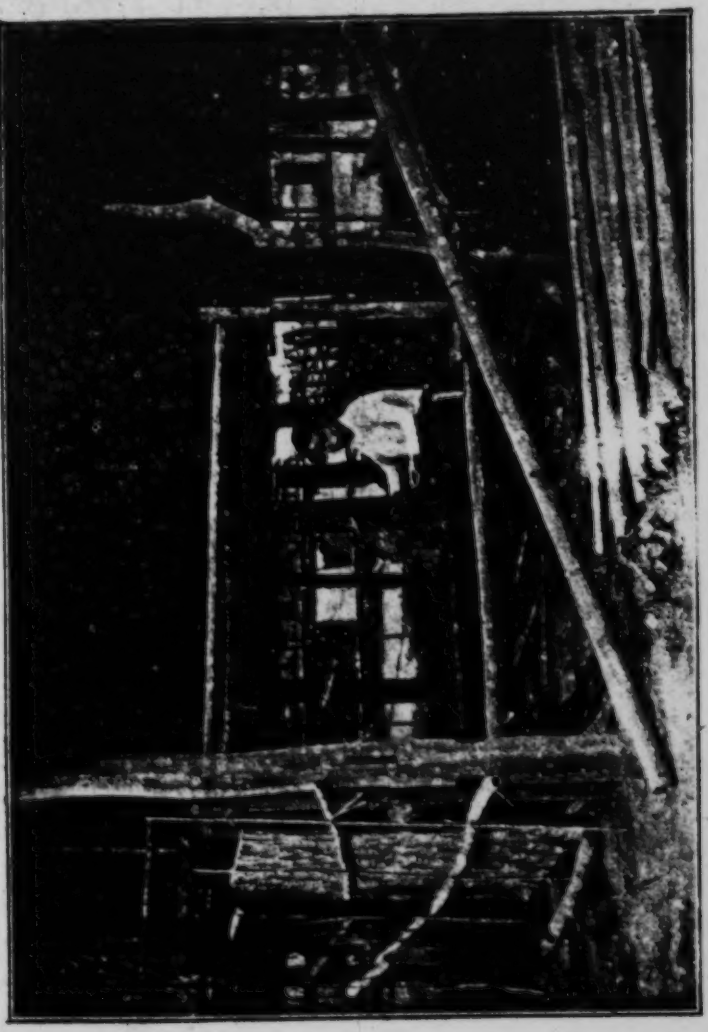

Fig. 109 /p.459/ A young woman weaving, at Muong-Son. (Courtesy of M. Besson.)